

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
Submission No. . . . .	683
Date Received: . . . . .	11-8-03
Secretary . . . . .	

"Loddon Brae",  
Newbridge 3551

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs  
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry  
Department of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia



Re: Inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation

- (i) I am in FULL AGREEMENT that the "Law" should presume that children spend equal time with each parent after separation.
- (ii) If this is not possible due to distance or schooling, the "Law" should allocate, automatically, every weekend or every second weekend, plus half the school holidays.
- (iii) The case for rebuttal of these arrangements – eg child abuse – by either parent – as with drug and alcohol abuse.
- (iv) In some cases, the father may not be able to arrange for his holidays to coincide with the school holidays and this would be where grandparents could help out.
- (v) Where grandparents are refused contact with their grandchildren, could they apply for a "Legal" form whereby they can show their ability to care for their grandchild/ren?
- (vi) Any disputes could be taken up by a committee of three people with power to interview the parents and then recommend their decision to the Family Court.
- (vii) In my experience, I have found Solicitors letters or direct requests, not satisfactory as (a) Solicitors cost too much for a nil result when no agreement can be reached and (b) counselling has no impact either.
- (viii) The existing child support formula is not "fair" in relation to contact with children. Our son has child support taken from his wages weekly, yet has not been 'allowed' to have 'visit' access to his son for seven months. Phone calls have been 'cut-off' and most times we can not even 'get through' to the number. This is very depressing for our son and our family.
- (ix) One year ago, today, his six year old daughter [REDACTED] passed away from [REDACTED]. Can you imagine his pain of not being allowed to visit her during her last days, in fact, not being told of her expected death. [REDACTED] and her brother were often in tears because they weren't allowed to visit their father.

I would hope that this Inquiry shows the current system is **NOT** fair to both parties in a separation, nor on the child/ren, especially where the separation is acrimonious and it seems that the mother is the one who has the "power" to dictate.

Yours faithfully,

*G.J. Scholes*

Mrs G.J. Scholes